

Ethnicity and Politics

Ashley Sears

Thom Herakovich

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Abstract/ Summary

This paper is about if race has an impression on how people feel on politically issues. Using different magazines and newspaper such as but not limited to Chicago Tribune, also my research through a survey conducted on the Quad of the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign will show the reason behind the critics on Obama's comment. After conducting my surveys and collecting data I have come up with a few opinions to my question. In the beginning my question came from a situation from MTV's video music awards that took place two months ago. The situation consisted of Kanye West coming up on stage while Tyler Swift was receiving her award for Best Video of the Year. While Swift was on stage West comes up on stage in the middle of her acceptance speech and states that he does not agree with Swift winning the award and that he feels that Beyonce had the best video of the year and then walks off. Swift was left standing on stage speechless not only in front of the audience but on national television as well. After the statement was said President Obama stated off the record during an interview that West was an "asshole" for his actions. After this statement was made media attacked Obama immediately and many felt was blown out of proportion. This made me think if President Bush was to make the same statement would the outcome be the same. Was it because the President is African American that his every word and action criticized. Do people feel certain ways about politics because of their ethnicity? I then decided to conduct my research by using surveys. After collecting and filing the data I found out some answers but also new questions as well. Most people thought that many people can effect one's political beliefs sometimes. These results tell me that if you are with a lot of people that feel one way about a subject instead of standing up about what they feel are right they will conform in fear of being different. But this also beings up

the question that if someone else feels the same way will you fight for what you feel is right and voice your opinion even if you are outnumbered.

Plan

- Find information about the point of view from a news paper/ article disagreeing with what President Obama said.
- Find another article agreeing with what President Obama said and that feel as through what he said was justified.
- Make a survey asking the students of the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign what their thoughts on the subject are by way of a survey.
- Make sure that the wording will not be leading or confusing but makes them think of what they truly feel about the subject.
- Try to be able to group the responds by providing a blank space on the survey to let the student be able to express their race.
- Based on the results be able to understand that was it just because president Obama is black that people are accusing him of making inappropriate comments on the issue of Kanye West.
- Also try to find out comments that previous presidents and other political/ public figures have made similar that no one has made such a big deal about as was made about President Obama's comment.

Introduction

Over the years there have been a number of comments by presidents that have be what some will call inappropriate. It is obvious that we just received our first black president which is none other

than Barack Obama. I find it interesting that every action and word said by our new president is commented on in a negative way. Recently at the Video Music Awards on MTV, Kanye West publicly embarrassed Taylor Swift for winning an award that he felt someone else should have won. There was no question that West was wrong for making such an outburst in front of the audience and the television world too. The next day, Obama commented on the incident and called West a “Jackass.” This comment was immediately singled out by the press and media for being inappropriate and unlike what presidents should do. I personally feel like worse comments have been made by **previous presidents** then President Obama’s comment. Many people disagree then some agree. It seem as if because our president is black every little comment and action is looked down upon. So does race make it just to be hard on our black president compared to previous presidents that were of course white? This story sparked my interest and made me ask the question of does race bring about different interpretations of comment?

Comment [t1]: what by who?

I feel like race does make an impression on everyone’s thoughts on certain issues that face the world. Until you are educated on the subject and speak on your true feelings on a certain subject your answer is blind. You will fight about something that your parents told your was wrong not understanding what you are really fighting for. Being educated on a topic in my opinion is your weapon in arguments and discussions. I must admit a perfect example of this was when I first got on this campus. I believed that it was wrong for them to take the chief away from the University. I believed that it was the school legacy, pride and tradition. I was for the chief until I educated myself on the true issues of why the chief was such a big deal. After educating myself on the issues I am against the chief. The only reason why I was for the chief in the beginning was because I was black and I felt like no other race has experienced anything to close to what my ancestors had experienced. This also helps my opinion on the issues at hand.

Just like me a lot of people are not aware of the other side of issues which can in the end hurt you. If you only see things from your side you will never understand other people's actions and feelings. You will not understand if you not step out your shoes for a second and step into theirs. In debates it makes you stronger to understand both sides of the argument because it makes your argument about the subject better. An example of this is if you have a black roommate and she loves Obama because he is being different and taking chances to change the country. You don't understand why Obama is such a big deal to her and why she feels the way she feel when you feel like he is not helping but instead making everything worse instead. Your roommate informs you the importance and being open minded to a black president and explain to you exactly what the president talks about. After having the conversation you understand that the president actually is helping the country even though it does not seem like he is doing much at the time. She understood your view which made you see hers too.

Every body feels strongly about public figures of their race and how they carry themselves in the public eye. The president of the United States is a role model to many African Americas all over the world. But even though he is our president everyone must understand that he is a human too. With human feelings and emotions, who just like us feels very strong about the people who symbolizes our race. After the incident at MTV's Video Music Awards everybody was mad at Kanye West for doing what he did to Taylor Swift. Everybody everywhere was talking about it from facebook to Twitter and e very where in between. But when Obama made a comment there was a big problem. I feel like no matters what he does there is always someone on his case no matter what it is. Bush has done far worse things but no one had anything to say to him.

Body

The main focus was my project was to get an understanding of what people feel about political views in other races. After gathering all my data I realized that people feel like one person can affect how others feel about political beliefs sometimes. So most believe that someone's belief on issues can be changed by one person. People are more likely to conform when it comes to political issues than to stand up and stand out of the group. During the election I remember running the ballots and hearing the comments being made around my neighborhood where I was an election judge. I remember people saying that they had never voted before but because Obama was running they came out to vote. Thinking about that day I realized that a lot of people were just voting because someone of their own race was running for president they may not have even known the issues but they knew that this was a big deal in the black community so they had to participate. This was a perfect example of people changing how they felt about politics not because of the issues but because of the race of this one person.

So instead of saying no I believe President Obama was right concerning his opinion about West - they stood behind what everyone was saying about him (The Washington Examiner). Although a lot of people felt that it was wrong for West to do such a thing to Swift, this is the same for all Obama's actions. It seems that the people at picking out everything they can to make the case that he is not just wrong about some things that he does but he is wrong for being our president to. People feel like he is not making our situation of being in a recession any better but actually making it worse. But if these people who oppose his decisions so much would just look at the facts they would realize that everything cannot and will not be fixed over night. Things are so bad that they would not be better until after his term is over. But a lot of others did not want Obama in the office in the first place because he is black. People criticize Obama's every move but what about the people who have actually done wrong. For example Don Imus made a

comment on his radio show calling a majority African Americans on a woman's basketball team "nappy haired heifers." This comment was needless to say not appropriate in any form or fashion. Another example of this is Trent Lott, who has made offensive comments about homosexuality and race during his terms as senator. This raises the question of why is Obama getting criticized for his every move when there are other things that are happening every day that no one seems to talk about. Like the teen violence events in Chicago that nothing is being done about. There is so much violence going on in Chicago that it is not safe to do or go anywhere in the place that you call home.

Total Surveys 85

Do you think one's own opinion effects (list 1)political beliefs (list 2)?

List 1

Everyone's	10
Many people's	35
Some people's	25
Few people's	5
No one's	5

List 2

After	5
Many	15
Sometimes	35
Seldom	15
Never	5
Always	10

Age

17-18	15
19-20	35
21-22	25
23-24	5
Other	5

Gender

Female	50
Male	35
Transgender	0

Ethnicity

African American/Black	15
Asian American	10
Caucasian/White	40
Hispanic	15
Native American	5
Other	0

Recommendations

After conducting this survey I was still left with many questions such as so why is it that one person can have such a powerful impact on a group of people's political beliefs? What is wrong with being different and standing up for what you believe in? What is so hard about voicing your opinion about political situations when you are trying to persuade others to believe your beliefs? In an individualist country like America why are people still afraid to voice their opinions and be different?

References

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